

National Canners Association

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Information
Letter



For N. C. A.
Members

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Newspapers Differentiate Fairly between Home and Commercial Canning in Oregon Tragedy.

In the press reports of the fatal Oregon food case, there was a fair differentiation between home and commercially canned foods.

A striking example of this was the article in the Chicago Tribune, where not only were the facts brought out in the article itself, but also in the head.

The Tribune article read, in part, as follows:

"The death of Esther Gerbig, 13 months old, to-day brought the number of dead from eating poisonous food at a family reunion dinner Saturday to eight. The child's father, Paul Gerbig, was in a critical condition and physicians did not expect him to live through the day. Botulinus in home preserved beans is believed to have caused the tragedy."

Likewise, the dispatches of the press associations were free from references to commercially canned food.

The National Canners Association and also the Public Health Service are conducting a thorough investigation into the exact causes of the Oregon tragedy, and the result will be made known to its members at the earliest possible time.

Doctor Evans Discusses Home Canning Dangers.

A few days prior to the outbreak in Oregon, Dr. W. A. Evans wrote as follows, under the caption, "Home Canning Dangers", in the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers of the Tribune Syndicate:



"The great majority of the outbreaks of botulinus poisoning are among those who have eaten home packed foods. No one is justified in eating any of the more dangerous varieties of home packed foods without first thoroughly cooking before serving them. The commercial canners are turning out far safer products. As matters now stand, there is rarely danger of botulism from eating commercially canned products and the outlook is that within a year or two there will be none at all. The commercial canners are showing great willingness to change their processes whenever safer procedures are shown to be feasible.

"That certain foods are more liable than others to be infected with botulinus is a matter of common information. Schoenholz, Esty, and Meyer investigated the infectibility of different foods. They infected foods with botulinus, heated them, packed them, kept them for a certain time, and then opened the cans and examined for bacillus botulinus and its products.

"They found canned corn, peas, salmon, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin spoiled very quickly and very toxic after being infected, heated insufficiently, and then canned. The cans were swollen and the products generally tasted wrong.

"Cans of asparagus and beets were sometimes found swollen and sometimes flat. The contents of the can sometimes appeared natural in taste, odor, and appearance, even though they were highly poisonous. The same was true of ripe olives. Sometimes it was found that infected asparagus, beets, and olives were not poisonous even though bacillus botulinus had been added and then the food had been heated.

"Canned red and green peppers were only weakly poisonous. Botulinus did not appear to make much poison in these. Spinach that was poisonous was sometimes found to taste sour, or cheesy; sometimes it tasted normal. The cans containing poisonous spinach were swollen in about half the tests.

"The same observation applied to string beans. About one-half the cans were 'swells'. There seemed to be very little chance that botulinus will make poison when it gets into apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes, and sauerkraut.

"Acidity was a factor in the life of the bacillus and its work as a poison maker. As a rule, some foods are safe.

"Underheating, prior to and during canning is only one factor in the development of botulinus poison. To protect against the danger, it is wise to select fresh foods, to clean them thoroughly, and to cut out the worm holes, bruises, and moldy parts.

All Parts of the United States to be Reached by
Radio Canned Foods Messages.

There will be wide use of the radio during Canned Foods Week, March 1-8. Availing themselves of this up-to-the-minute method of communication, speakers will reach vast audiences in all parts of the country. The talks will be strictly non-commercial in character, with the result that the facilities of the principal stations are being made available for addresses upon the excellence, wholesomeness, and convenience of canned foods.

To date, prospective radio speakers have advised the National Canned Foods Week Committee that there will be addresses made from New York; Philadelphia; Chicago; Minneapolis; McKeesport, Pennsylvania; and Morgantown, West Virginia. One of the speakers heard from will speak in four different cities. Another will make seven talks, one each evening, from the broadcasting station in his home city.

The National Canned Foods Week Committee urges local committees to consider the advisability of securing a place on the program for a speaker in cities where there are broadcasting stations. This should be done as soon as possible, inasmuch as radio programs are made up considerably in advance. When an engagement to speak has been secured, it will be appreciated if the Washington office be notified, as the Committee has prepared tentative speeches, which it will be glad to forward upon request.

What One Big Canning Company is Doing to Push Canned Foods Week.

A notable example of individual Canned Foods Week cooperation is the effort of a large Western concern, which will dominate its March advertising with a Canned Foods Week message going through the magazines to something like twenty million readers. These advertisements will be in color, and reproductions will be sent to the retail grocery trade throughout the United States. This broadside will be an additional reminder to retail grocers everywhere that March 1-8 is Canned Foods Week, and the time for them to get busy. It will result in featuring that particular brand in thousands of grocery windows, especially so since the way has been previously paved by the brokers and distributors.

This concern will also encourage the decorating of windows in the shopping districts during Canned Foods Week. Last year, thousands of Canned Foods Week displays appeared in the windows of the leading drygoods, shoe, and other stores. It is expected that this will be repeated this year on even a larger scale.

Canned Foods Week Luncheons Promise to be Big Feature.

Effort is now being specially directed towards Canned Foods Week luncheons by such organizations as the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, and other luncheon clubs.

Already, 1,356 letters have been sent to Rotary Clubs throughout the United States, suggesting that they put on special luncheons during Canned Foods Week, March 1-8. The replies have been beyond all expectations.

Up to date, about one hundred and twenty-five luncheons have been arranged for that week from the Rotary Clubs alone, and there have been many requests for speakers. Every day brings letters announcing additional luncheons. Chairman Royal F. Clark is scheduled to deliver an address at the Canned Foods Week luncheon of the Chicago Rotary Club.

The National Canned Foods Week Committee has arranged a selected canned foods menu for these luncheons. There is indicated the number of cans of each commodity which will be required to serve one hundred persons. There is also included with the menu copies of addresses that might be delivered on that occasion, and likewise copy of statistics of the canning industry. This literature may be had on application to the National Canned Foods Week Committee.

When the Can Opener Means Money.

This is the title of an interesting article by Miss Anne Pierce, of the New York Tribune, which reads as follows:

"This is the time of year to wield the can opener with special frequency.

"At the canners' convention in Buffalo last week we found some new friends and were reminded of some old ones that we had forgotten. Sauerkraut in the can is with us all the year round now to keep the frankfurter properly accompanied and provide more vitamins; there are fresh prunes canned, which are really a piquant plum in a light syrup, making it a perfect breakfast fruit ready to serve; kidney beans make a nutritious side dish and the long cooking necessary is done for you; a clam chowder comes ready made from the most flavorful hard clams and carrying a flavor of browned salt pork, onions, and other well cooked vegetables, that make it the real Yankee chowder (add water or milk and heat and serve; the potatoes are in it, but not too many of them.)

"These are specialties you may have overlooked and they give variety at low cost to the winter menu."

United States Navy in the Market for Canned String Beans.

Bids will be opened at the Navy Department, under Schedule 1911, Supplies and Accounts, at 10 a.m., on March 11, 1924, on 570,000 pounds of canned string beans.

Canners interested should communicate with the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and request blanks for bids on the above requisition.

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